

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants respond herein to the Office Action dated June 13, 2006.

Applicants' attorneys appreciate the Examiner's thorough search and examination of the present patent application and the indication of allowability of claims 4, 5, 9, 10, 16-18, and 21-26 if amended.

Claims 1-26 are pending in this application. Claims 1-3, 6-8, 11-15, 19, and 20 have been rejected. Claims 4, 5, 9, 10, 16-18, and 21-26 have been objected to.

Claims 1-3, 6-8, 11-15, 19 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,239,994 to Abdoulin ("Abdoulin") in the view of U.S. Patent No. 6,650,552 to Takagi et al. ("Takagi").

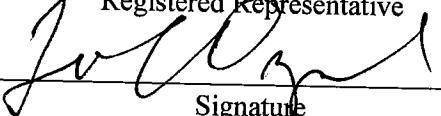
Claims 4, 5, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18 and 21-26 stand objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In response, independent claim 1 was amended to include limitations of objected to claim 4 and relevant limitations of intervening claims 2 and 3. Similarly, independent claims 13, and 15 were amended to include limitations of objected to claim 16. Claims 4 and 16 were cancelled.

Thus, Applicants' independent claims 1, 13, and 15 are now believed to be allowable. Claims 2, 3, 5-12, 14 and 17-26 depend directly or indirectly from above discussed independent claims and are, therefore, allowable for the same reasons, as well as because of the combination of features in those claims with the features set forth in the respective independent claims.

In view of the above, it is submitted that all claims in this application are now in condition for allowance, prompt notification of which is requested.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450, on August 1, 2006.

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Name of applicant, assignee or
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Signature

August 1, 2006
Date of Signature

LCD:JK:ck/jh

Respectfully submitted,



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